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TAGS: [UNSC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [MO](#) [WI](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA SUPPORTS FIFTH ROUND OF WESTERN SAHARA TALKS

REF: STATE 88765

(SBU) We delivered reftel demarche on August 20 to MFA Senior Counselor for International Organizations Petr Ilichev, who said that Russia supported holding a fifth round of Western Sahara talks later this year and preferred that they be led by the SYG's Personal Envoy Peter Van Walsum. Ilichev explained that when Van Walsum visited Moscow earlier this year, the MFA told him that he maintained Russia's confidence as the person most capable of carrying out further negotiations on Western Sahara. Ilichev cautioned, however, that considering that the Polisario said that it had "lost confidence" in Van Walsum, it might be necessary to "strike a balance" between supporting him and responding to "facts on the ground." Ilichev warned against the UN finding itself in a situation similar to that in Eritrea, where one party would not agree to meet with the representative named by the SYG.
BEYRLE